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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: AL-AQSA MILITANTS AND PA POLICE CLASH
IN JENIN, HAMAS AND FATAH SUPPORTERS CLASH IN GAZA -- MAY
9, 2005 (1300 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Exchanges of gunfire erupted between al-Aqsa gunmen and PA police May 9 in Jenin, after the police opened fire on an al-Aqsa leader's car when he refused to stop at a PA police checkpoint, according to PA security sources. As of 1300 hours, community leaders were working to contain the situation. Six Israeli peace activists, including head of Rabbis for Human Rights Arik Ascherman, and five Palestinians were arrested in non-violent protests against the separation barrier in Bil'in near Ramallah, on May 6. At least 15 Palestinians were wounded in clashes that broke out between Hamas and Fatah supporters in Rafah, Dayr al-Balah and Khan Yunis May 6 following local elections held in five Gaza municipalities May 5. Six Palestinians suffered gunshot wounds during clashes in Rafah, and at least another ten were injured by stones in clashes in al-Burayj. End Summary.

West Bank

[1](#)2. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Deaths: PIJ members killed a Palestinian accused of collaborating with the IDF in Tulkarm May 7, according to Palestinian media.

-- Injuries: According to Palestinian sources, five Palestinians were injured in clashes with the IDF in Dura village, near Hebron, on May 7.

-- Armed Clashes: On May 9, exchanges of gunfire erupted between al-Aqsa gunmen and PA police in Jenin, after the police opened fire on an al-Aqsa leader's car when he refused to stop at a PA police checkpoint there, according to PA security sources. As of 1300 hours, community leaders were working to contain the situation.

-- Arrests: Six Israeli peace activists, including head of Rabbis for Human Rights Arik Ascherman, and five Palestinians were arrested in non-violent protests against the separation barrier in Bil'in, near Ramallah, on May 6, according to Israeli and Palestinian newspapers.

-- Arrests: IDF soldiers arrested a suspected Hamas militant, Salam Zaidan, on May 7 at the Huwwara checkpoint. Zaidan was carrying a bag with bomb-making materials, according to an IDF press release.

-- Arrests: IDF soldiers arrested seven alleged PIJ activists in Burqin village, north of Jenin, on May 8, according to Palestinian sources.

-- Arrests: IDF soldiers arrested Palestinian Salamah Rashaydah near Bethlehem on May 8 on suspicion of selling weapons, according to Palestinian sources.

-- Security Cooperation: PA police detained an Israeli woman in Ramallah and returned her to the IDF on May 8, according to PA security sources.

[1](#)3. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- The PA Higher Elections Committee will announce results for municipal elections on May 9, resolving disputed polling results in several localities.

Gaza

[1](#)4. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that at least 15 Palestinians were wounded in clashes that broke out between Hamas and Fatah supporters in Rafah, Dayr al-Balah and Khan Yunis following local elections held in five Gaza municipalities May 5. Six Palestinians suffered gunshot wounds during clashes in Rafah and at least another ten were injured by stones in al-Burayj, according to UNRWA (see "Political Developments").

-- Catch-up item: Injury: UNRWA reported that shrapnel injured one Palestinian May 6, when a Qassam rocket fired towards the Israeli town of Sderot fell short and landed on his house east of Bayt Hanoun.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that Palestinians militants fired two mortar shells at Israeli settler and IDF targets in the Gaza Strip May 6-7.

-- Mortars/Rockets: UNRWA reported that Palestinians militants fired a Qassam rocket towards the Israeli town of Sderot May 6 that fell short and injured one Palestinian, in addition to the two reported in the May 6 SitRep.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants launched three shooting attacks overnight May 6-7.

-- Explosions: UNRWA reported that the IDF safely detonated an IED May 7 near the barrier fence east of Bayt Hanoun.

15. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- Israeli media reported that IDF soldiers arrested two Palestinians May 7 after the two attempted to cross illegally into Israel.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open May 6-9, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was closed May 6-8.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed May 6-8.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers May 7-9, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction May 8-9.

-- Karni Terminal was open May 7-9.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for arrivals and departures May 6-9.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed May 7-9. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except for males aged 16-30.

17. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- UNRWA reported that clashes between Fatah and Hamas members broke out in various locations in the Gaza Strip May 6-9, in the aftermath of elections for local councils held in five Gaza municipalities May 5. Unofficial results proclaimed Hamas the winner of a majority of council seats in al-Burayj, Rafah, and Bayt Lahiya. On May 6 in Rafah, some 10,000 Hamas supporters turned out to celebrate the Hamas victory there. Several hours later, 15,000 Fatah supporters took to the streets in Rafah, clashing with the Hamas supporters. UNRWA reported that six Palestinians were injured, one of them seriously. Palestinian sources put the number of injured at 10 in Rafah. A similar scene played out in al-Burayj where a reported 15,000 Hamas supporters were met in the streets by 8,000 Fatah supporters. Hamas reportedly canceled its celebratory marches in Jabaliya to avoid further clashes, according to UNRWA.

-- Fatah supporters held a demonstration of some 4,000 people in al-Burayj May 7, protesting the results of the municipal elections there.

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